

Journal

of the Liberal Ministry



30273

Vol. I, No. I

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UNITARIAN MINISTERS' ASSOCIATION

20401 Hilliard Road
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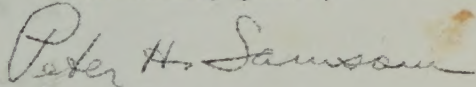
Fellow U.M.A. Members:

Almost a year ago, the Annual Meeting of the U.M.A. directed the Executive Committee to explore the possibility of a "Journal of the Liberal Ministry."

You hold in your hands a sample cover and tables of contents, with cost estimates and proposals on editing, producing and distributing a professional journal for our ministry. These pages sum up the results of your Executive Committee's extended discussions and studies. Alan Deale of Rockford has generously served at our request in heading this project.

This material is offered to you, both as needed information and as your Executive Committee's confident recommendation, after a year of serious exploration of this possibility. The plan now awaits your frank discussion and decision at the U.M.A. Annual Meeting on May 20. Your written comments and suggestions will be most welcome.

Fraternally yours,



Peter H. Samsom
U.M.A. President

"Journal of the Liberal Ministry"
Proposed Typographic Treatment

The tone and character of a publication are in large measure established by the format--the typographic "personality" which creates the first impression.

The "Journal" cover here submitted has been designed to suggest dignity, modernity, and professional competence.

The masthead is hand lettered; subheads and text type should match the modern yet faintly "ecclesiastical" feel of the title lines.

The monogram--JLM--avoids any controversial symbolism, yet serves as a "trademark," colophon, and editorial identification. It can be used elsewhere throughout the editorial pages as a divider or typographic ornament. It is a concise version of the title itself.

Headings and typographic treatment of editorial contents--stem from the title lettering. When a printer has been selected, his type book will serve as a guide to available text types, from which an appropriate face can be chosen and harmonious text pages can be designed.

Once a style has been established--article headings, department headings, fillers, quotes, etc.--it is a simple matter to follow typographic treatment in succeeding issues.

Linotype matter set in galley form will permit simple and economical make-up.

Editorial contents then become the major problem; text matter in galley form falls easily into the established format.

A. E. Peters

(Public Relations)

JOURNAL OF THE LIBERAL MINISTRY

Vol. I, No. 2

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Modern Man Discovers Myth

What is Paul Tillich Really Saying?

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The Prairie Group

DENOMINATION

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The Role of the I.A.R.F. in the World Today

DENOMINATION

The Mission of the Department of World Churches

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PARISH PRACTICE

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The Message of Martin Buber

The Education of the Liberal Minister

The Intellectual Responsibility of the Liberal
Ministry

DENOMINATION

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PARISH PRACTICE

Modern Architecture and the Religious Liberal

Age Discrimination in the Ministry

A Bibliography of Worship

The Minister and the Funeral

RELATED FIELDS

Survey of Recent Literature in Psychology

City Planning and the Search for Meaning

Church Lobbies and Social Action

BOOKS

EDITORIAL

LETTERS

The Unitarian Ministers' Association has been concerned with a proposal for a professional journal of the liberal ministry for some time. In cooperation with the executive committee I have prepared this sample. We have examined the journals of the Congregational and Methodist ministers and that of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. The editors of these publications have given us helpful advice.

We have exchanged correspondence with many of the editors of the Unitarian and Universalist publications. Their interest is high and the response favorable.

From the sample tables of contents you can see that we are thinking in terms of a Journal that is both intellectual and practical. There is every reason why such a publication should often be controversial. It should always be thought-provoking and helpful to the minister in his many sided professional responsibilities. We would hope the content and departments could be creatively varied.

COST ESTIMATES: These are based on a firm bid from a printer. We estimate that \$500 per issue would amply cover the cost of the journal. This breaks down as follows: Printing, \$200 (32 Pages, 6x9", 1000 copies); editorial stipend, \$100; secretarial, etc., \$100; addressing and mailing, \$100. Thus the Journal would cost approximately \$1,500 per year for three issues. The fortunate factor here is a low bid by a highly reputable printer.

EDITING AND PRODUCTION: We propose that there be one chief editor and a number of department editors for the Journal. It will be the task of the chief editor to solicit, select and edit the material. Naturally the issues would be planned well in advance with the cooperation of the departmental editors who would also solicit, select and edit material in their respective departments and send it on to the chief editor. The chief editor will get the material to the

printer, read galley, paste up, check page proof and give the printer the go-ahead.

CIRCULATION: We will need a circulation manager to supervise problems of addressing and mailing. The Journal could be mailed from the printer in envelopes that would be addressed on the plates at headquarters and bulk-mailed to the printer. Or it may be possible to mail the Journal from the printer without envelopes if we have him keep a set of plates current.

We expect there will be subscribers outside the liberal ministry and any system that is adopted will take this into account including a subscription price.

ADVERTISING: It will be up to the editorial board whether our proposed Journal will accept advertising. Possibly we could take some paid ads from publishing houses.

We suggest that the chief editor be a member of the executive committee of the U.M.A. and that perhaps the three non-officer members of the U.M.A. executive committee serve on the editorial board of the Journal.

Throughout our deliberations and planning we have constantly been aware of the possibility of a merged minister's association. We have consulted with the president of the Universalist Ministers' Association.

These samples can only give a hint of the great possibilities for a Journal of the Liberal Ministry. I have in my file dozens of suggested article topics from our ministers which would make any journal a stimulating asset for our whole ministry.

Obviously, a sample like this cannot include names of authors with proposed articles.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan G. Deale

Journal

of the Liberal Ministry

Volume I

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SPRING 1961

Journal

of the Liberal Ministry



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The Journal of the Liberal Ministry is published by the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association. This publication is the successor to *Teamwork*. Subscription price is \$5.00 per year; however, the Ministers Association dues entitle members to receive each issue. Entered as third class matter at the Post Office at Elgin, Illinois, under Section 34.66 of P. L. and R. Editorial address 2101 Auburn St., Rockford, Ill.

This Journal is published in the interests of the liberal ministry. It will be concerned with the many, many facets that enter into the life of a minister. It plans to be both intellectual and practical. It will be concerned with the range of ideas as they affect each of us and it will also be interested in the day to day aspects of the work of the ministry which is not always intellectual.

Just as the minister today faces many problems we are confident that there are many solutions. It will be our practice to present articles discussing problems as well as solutions. There will be times when we may do no more than ask questions. Convinced that if we but ask the right questions the answers will often be forthcoming we need never apologize for not giving all the solutions.

In a sense this journal will reflect directly upon the Unitarian and the Universalist ministry. It will be an expression of our joint interests and concerns. It will depend to a great degree for its material upon the men who are working actively and creatively in our many parishes.

If this publication can help us share our ideas and our practical applications as we perform our unique ministry in the world then it will justify itself. Our combined denominations have great potential. It will be the responsibility of our ministers to play a major part in making that potential an actuality. This Journal will make every attempt to further the liberal ministry and its broad concerns.

We solicit manuscripts from everyone concerned about liberal religion for future issues of the Journal. Articles may be sent to department editors or directly to the editorial office.

The Journal of Liberal Ministry goes to all members of the Unitarian and Universalist Ministers Associations. For all others the subscription price is \$5.00 per year. Paul Bicknell of Elgin is our circulation manager. He will work closely with me and the printers. The JLM will be issued in Fall, Winter and Spring in the months of November, February and May respectively. The editorial deadline for these issues is October 1, January 1, and April 1.

This Journal succeeds the journal *Teamwork*, so ably edited by Robert M. Bowman, who is chairman of our editorial board. The editor wishes to thank Professor James Luther Adams of Harvard for his great assistance in making this first issue a reality.

In future issues we plan to include reviews of significant books and letters to the editor. The editorial policy will be flexible. This journal will be as good as our ministers wish to make it. It is my hope that this means the Journal of the Liberal Ministry will be dynamic, creative and useful.

Alan G. Deale

Contributors

FRIEDRICH HEILER is a distinguished German theologian and professor at the University of Marburg. The author of numerous works he knew Rudolph Otto, the subject of his article.

HENRY NELSON WIEMAN, the noted philosopher, is the author of many books including *Man's Ultimate Commitment*. After teaching at a number of universities he is currently on the faculty of Southern Illinois University.

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THE EXPERIENCE OF THE DIVINE

Universal Theology

By Dr. Friedrich Heiler on the Twentieth Anniversary
of Rudolf Otto's Death

(March 6, 1937)

Many old-timers of the last generation will remember a tall, slender man with snow-white hair and fine features as he made his daily rounds in measured tread from his home on Sybel Street to Marburg University; it was none other than Dr. Rudolf Otto, professor of theology at Marburg University where he taught hundreds of students in systematic theology from 1917 to 1929.

Prior to that time he taught at Göttingen University 1904-14 and at Breslau 1914-17 until he was offered the chair at Marburg following the decease of the renowned Wilhelm Hermann. After World War I, Professor Otto was Germany's foremost theologian whose renown spread beyond the country's borders, and at whose feet sat theologians and philosophers alike from all parts of the world. It was due chiefly to the great impact of his book, *The Idea of the Holy*, that he was invited to important lectureships throughout the English-speaking world. In 1924 he visited the United States, giving the Haskell lectures at Oberlin College and speaking at other leading universities. Because of failing health he had to decline India's invitation to lecture on Comparative Religions at Calcutta University, and also the offer to deliver the Gifford lectures at Aberdeen.

His first literary activity began at Göttingen toward the turn of the century when he published his research on *The Philosophy of Religion Based on Kant and Fries* (Tübingen 1909; New York, 1931), and his new edition of Schleiermacher's *Addresses on Religion* at the centennial commemoration. These, as well as his *Life and Ministry of Jesus According to the Historical and Critical Method*

(Göttingen, 1902; Chicago, 1908) made him one of the great proponents of liberal thought and philosophy; unfortunately, the liberal views expressed in the latter so offended the Council of Churches at Berlin that he was denied the educator's chair for some time thereafter, and it was 1914 before he again taught theology, this time at Breslau University, and then in 1917 at Marburg University, as related above; and he was professor emeritus until his death in 1937.

Professor Otto attained world renown by his great work, *The Idea of the Holy* (or the Divine). The dynamic effect it had on the spiritual life of that era is difficult for our generation to grasp; according to Adolph von Harnack, the book seemed to have the same electrifying effect as had Schleiermacher's *Addresses on Religion*. It was as though "a burst of enlightenment and glorious freedom swept over Christians of the evangelical faith

in Germany." Otto seemed to have invaded a new dimension — that of mysticism. According to Rudolf Otto, he who says "Holy Ghost" means mysticism. In a letter to Friedrich Heiler in 1919 he wrote, "Confronted with the frightful, modern caricatures of our religion and theology, we must go back to the pure, mystical method." To him all religion, including the primitive forms, is mysticism — a hushed awe of the "Numinous," a shuddering before the "Mysterium tremendum," God's "wrath," a rapture and exaltation at the "Fascinans," God's "Glory." The indescribable secret of the "Holy" unveils itself as the innermost secret of the Divine, the qualities of the Divine which can be grasped by the human intellect: Wisdom, Justice and Mercy are nothing but the "schematizing" of this primary religious experience. The personal and the superpersonal are the two opposite poles of the Divine; but the "Thou" in God we turn to is only "what he allows us to see — as the Cape of Good Hope is nothing but a promontory of a chain of mountains, whose massif is hidden to the human eye in the mist of eternal darkness."

The first impetus for the writing of this book began, not in modern theology and not in that of Schleiermacher, but in Otto's first great visit to the Orient; in fact it was in a Hebraic synagogue in North Africa when he heard the devout Isaiah's cry of "Holy, Holy, Holy"; it was strengthened in Islamic mosques, in Buddhist shrines, in Hindu temples.

Even before undertaking his world travel he had emphasized

that "in the true scientific sense" "a new affirmation of the truth of Christianity will be possible only when it is understood in its affinity and its relation to the conception of religion in general, i.e. on the background of History of Religions and Comparative History to Religions." In fact, Otto made this the focal point of his research. In *The Idea of the Holy* as well as in its supplements, *Essays Concerning the Numinous* (Title I: Gotha, 1923; 5th & 6th ed., 1932 under title *The Sensation of the Divine*; Title 2: Gotha, 1923, 5th & 6th ed. 1932 under the title *Sin and Original Guilt*, published together in English translation, *Religious Essays*, London, 1937) the examples he gave in demonstrating his new conception were mostly taken from the non-Christian religions. *Eastern and Western Mysticism* (Gotha 1926, 2d ed. 1929; English tr., New York, 1932), and *India's Religion of Grace and Christianity Compared and Contrasted* (Gotha 1930; New York, 1930) are typical examples of such comparison and evaluation, in which Otto brings out not only what the several religions have in common, but also their individual characteristics.

The preparation for this "most complicated and most valuable task" for History of Religions was facilitated by his congenial and keen psychological intuition as well as by a knowledge of the languages in which the respective religious texts were written. In his study and ever available stood the great Petersburg Sanskrit Glossary; his remarkable knowledge of ancient Sanskrit enabled him to translate many Indian philosophi-

cal and theological books. From the study of these came Otto's *Texts of Indian Mysticism of God* (Jena 1917, 2d ed. I. Jena 1923 — II. Tübingen 1923) as well as various other writings, as for instance *Deity and Deities of the Aryans* (Giessen 1932).

The perspective of religious history gave Otto a new glimpse into the Life and Ministry of Jesus, as revealed in his book *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man* (Munich, 1934, 2d ed. 1940; London, 1938); which, together with *Eastern and Western Mysticism* is rated first among his many literary efforts. In light of the eastern cults and psychologies, Otto evaluated the historical worth of the gospels even more positively than did many New Testament scholars. The miracles of Jesus, His Transfiguration on the Mount Tabor, and the miraculous experiences of St. Paul were for Otto not just migratory legends but were realities that stemmed from a charismatic milieu.

Rudolf Otto was not only a scholar in his ivory tower; he considered the renewal of the Protestant service as a most important matter. His observations are contained in various works, such as *The Renewal and Development of Public Worship* (Giessen, 1925), *Liturgical Programs (Chorales and Hymnal for Worship)*, *Liturgical Leaflets*; and so forth, in which latter work both G. Mensching and R. Wallau collaborated with Otto (Gotha, 1926).

Inside the ecumenical movement Otto wished to strengthen the Protestant wing against the Greek-Orthodox and the Anglican

Churches. The 400-year commemoration of the Marburg dispute between Luther and the other reformers in 1929 was intended to unite more closely the whole Protestant world. Of vital importance seemed to him the cultivation of ethics in Protestant circles; his talks on ethics were published by his pupil, Karl Küssner (*Life and Its Responsibility*; Stuttgart, 1941). Thanks to Otto's efforts, the Prussian Landtag in 1929 sanctioned a chair for the teaching of Social Ethics at Marburg University. Already in 1922, a chair for the study of Comparative Religions had been founded there.

His most important foundation however, is the Museum of Religious Objects at Marburg which has now — since 1950 — been located in the Marburg Castle. Here we may view a large collection of religious objects from the whole world. The Museum is intended to present a complete collection of ritualistic symbols of all faiths, both Christian and non-Christian, both ancient and modern.

Not only the scientific interpretation of non-Christian beliefs was an all-important theological task to Rudolph Otto, but also the personal contact with the believers themselves, and the cooperation with them in all decisive human problems, especially the sociological problems and, above all, the peace question. He, an ardent defender of the individual character of every religion, rejected the idea of artificially creating a new, syncretistic religion, as well as the foundation of a "Religion of the Future." Wanting to realize his

ideas on a larger scale, he organized the so-called "Brotherhood through Religion" movement in 1921; what a pity that after a promising start it had to fail because the general circumstances did not favor such an endeavor. Nevertheless, after the collapse of the National Socialist regime, renewed efforts by his followers led to its rebirth under the name of "German Branch of the World Congress of Faiths," which is now under the leadership of Professor Otto's most ardent

pupil, Karl Küssner. With the intensification of the political relations between Europe and the Asiatic peoples, the encounter of the Western world with Eastern religions will be inevitable.

Rudolf Otto's theology and its practical application are of vital interest today. Already forty years ago he rightly predicted that "a great world movement is under way," thanks to the better understanding of Christianity and the other great religions.



Raising the Budget

"Churches don't exist to raise money, but if they can't raise money, they don't exist" — From The Jamestown Unitarian

Some of our churches feel that they cannot increase their programs (nor their ministers' salaries) because their income is too small. Yet many of these churches could greatly increase their incomes, if they would hold adequate financial canvasses.

How to raise money in churches is well known today. The method has gradually been worked out over the years, from the tremendous experience of the professional fund-raisers. The United Appeal has been teaching these methods in seminars held in our various Conferences around the country. Any Conference may have a seminar in its area, if it has enough churches and Fellowships that will send laymen to be trained. The cost to the church is \$25 for the training of two laymen. The United Appeal covers all the other expenses of the seminar.

Any minister in a church where the income is too small to pay for the program that he would like to have, can have his church income increased sharply if he will (a) persuade one or two laymen in his church to take the needed training, so that they will know how to conduct an adequate campaign, and (b) persuade one of the men to give 2 to 4 weeks (depending on the size of the church) to run the campaign.

Any church that is unwilling to provide these two necessary resources is forced to limp along with inadequate income because its financial canvass has not been adequate.

— RR

THE RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF EXISTENTIALISM

HENRY NELSON WIEMAN

The central current of thought running through all forms of existentialism can be approached by way of what the existentialists say about the limitations of reason. They make two statements about reason which reverse the prevailing teachings of Western culture since the day of the Greeks. The first of these two statements is that the existence of the individual cannot be contained and controlled within the limits of any rational system. From the depths of individual existence rise demands that break through every established system of order set up by reason. There is a creativity that seeks vividness of consciousness and depth of reality beyond the compass of rational order.

The second statement about reason made by the existentialists is that ultimate reality in which and by which we live cannot be fitted into any structure of human thought. What we call the universe made up of all the objects the human mind can know from atoms to galaxies and from tables and chairs to forests and flowers, everything known and knowable to the human mind, is just a selection lifted out of the all-encompassing mystery. This selection is lifted out of the incomprehensible mystery of being because the focus of attention picks out certain elements and ignores all else. Also the human imagination builds up certain structures of thought and excludes everything else from consideration. The focus of human attention and the structures of human imagination thus erect an artificial world that floats on the ocean of mystery. This ocean of mystery is called Being. It can never be comprehended by any possible rational system.

The existentialists say that Western man deceives himself into

thinking that he is pre-eminently dominated and controlled by reason. The source of this self-deception is his culture and his history. He has been reared in a culture that for almost three thousand years has been emphasizing reason above all else. Our accepted moral standards declare that moral conduct is conduct guided by reason. Whether you go to Plato or Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas or Paley and Bentham and Kant or Hegel, always you find reason exalted above all else. Even our religion has been based on reason by teaching that a supernatural God has laid down a system of law and order for the universe, for society and history and for the individual.

All this pressure put on the individual makes him think of himself as a rational being. He will admit that he departs from the demands of reason at times; but for the most part he keeps this private to himself and even conceals it from himself as much as possible. One of the chief things that the existentialists try to do is to make the individual throw off

this self-deception about himself by which he conceals from himself the depth and mystery of his existence. This self-deception is lack of authenticity and bad faith, say the existentialists. Man can never know what he truly is so long as he lives within the confines of any rational system say the existentialists. Every rational system is like a prison when a man or a culture or a period of history settles down to live in its confines. It brings on stagnation and death. Something in human life demands that we break out beyond every established order of reason into the mystery of the great beyond. This mystery of the great beyond some of the existentialists call Transcendence. Others call it Being with a capital B. Some of the theologians call it God.

To my mind it is a dangerous aberration to give the name of deity to the mystery of being called Transcendence. It is dangerous because mystery can give no direction, no guidance, no meaning or purpose to human existence precisely because it is mystery. When called divine it gives opportunity for religious leaders. They are idols. They give to religious leadership a dangerous power over the conduct of human life, in the end a destructive power. On the other hand I believe there is a profound religious significance to be derived from existentialism. This I shall try to demonstrate.

But over against existentialism and this new theology, the heritage of reason created through three thousand years of Western culture must never be lost. The power of reason beginning in ancient Su-

meria, brought to clarity in Greece and practically applied in Europe and America, is a contribution to the human race second to none. No statement should be accepted as true that fails to meet the tests of reason. A faith upheld on any other ground can only lead to illusion and destruction.

Yet no culture can comprehend all the values and possibilities of human existence. Hence the need of Western culture at the peak of its power to recognize its limitations, lest arrogance be its destruction. Merely to attack existentialism without learning whatever truth and right it may have is mistaken procedure because it will leave this truth and right in the hands of our foes as a weapon with which to destroy us. The way to conquer the enemy is to learn from him the sources of his strength. In the previous sentence the word "enemy" is not intended to suggest hostility but only the dialectic of discussion between opposites.

This mystery beyond the reach of reason, always entering conscious experience on the fringes of reason and sometimes disrupting the order of reason, we must keep exposed, because our existence is tied into it. We can never understand ourselves, and we can never find what to live for that is fitted to our existence, so long as we think that reason can be the master of our lives. Something else other than reason opens up the frontier and into that unexplored region we must go whether we like it or not. The function of reason is not to control and direct this basic drive but to search out the conditions

under which it can open the way for a more profound and comprehensive order of reason.

By reason is here meant any system within which it is possible to make logical inferences and reliable predictions and thereby anticipate future developments. Also reason is the ability to construct such a system within limits of imagination.

This brings us to the crucial question which the existentialists have not answered or, otherwise stated, have answered in so many contradictory ways that no single answer can be got from them. The crucial question is: How shall we interpret this basic drive in human existence that cannot be contained nor controlled by any rational system? The exposure of this unsolved problem at the deepest level of human existence is what I understand to be the meaning of existentialism. I am going to suggest an answer to that question.

This drive rising out of the depths of human existence is to expand beyond any known limit what man can appreciate as good and distinguish as evil. It is the drive to deepen and vivify our consciousness of good and evil. It is something that compels us either to increase continuously the freedom, power and responsibility of man to control the conditions of his existence or else break down in confusion and destruction.

For this reason no rational system can control the individual, no rational system can control a civilization or a culture, except as it is transitional to a more comprehensive and adequate system. This means that always on the outer

limits of every system, and especially during transitional periods when an old system is breaking down, there will be what the existentialists call the absurd or the encounter with nothingness, otherwise called the mystery of Being.

In the field of morality one of the more famous periods of breakdown into irrational absurdity transitional to the creation of a more comprehensive and adequate system of morals occurred in the history of Greece. The transitional period was that of the sophists followed by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle who created the more comprehensive system.

In the field of religion one of the more famous breakdowns of old faiths into a period of confusion of many faiths transitional to a more profound and comprehensive faith was in the period of Hellenism when Christianity arose.

In the field of politics and government one notable breakdown of political order leading to a more comprehensive and powerful system of government was the transition from feudalism to the national governments of Europe and America.

In the field of economic order a notable breakdown occurred with the first industrial revolution with its misery and absurdity until the economic system of modern industry became established.

Now we have come to another breakdown that will either end in irrationality, absurdity and destruction or else will be transitional to the creation of a more comprehensive, profound and powerful order. The existentialists are giving voice to this breakdown.

They are exposing the problem and forcing us to recognize it. This breakdown into absurdity can be viewed from many different angles. I shall look at only a few of the more conspicuous examples.

Nationalism is breaking down. Independent, sovereign nations can no longer control the social developments of our time. The struggle of sovereign and independent nations to do so becomes increasingly absurd and irrational. Yet no international order has yet developed to take the place of the several nations.

When the individual is deprived of a political order than can give to his life the sense of high importance by reason of his identification with it, he has the experience called by the existentialists the encounter with nothingness. To avoid this encounter with nothingness the individuals sometimes build up a frenzied and false nationalism, to give themselves the sense of dignity they have lost. This is one of the causes of the rise of Nazism in Germany. It is one of the dangerous developments of nationalism in United States today. It is dangerous and self-destructive because the nation no longer has the independence, power and stability that may once have justified the vision of national greatness.

What has been said about nationalism applies also to the family. There was a time when some individuals lived for the pride and honor of the family. The family gave the individual a sense of dignity and worth, living for something that extended through the generations far beyond the extent

of his own brief days. But today the family has no such cohesion, no such continuing identity. Also the family can no longer encompass the life of the individual because the services and values and achievements once confined to the family are now scattered out to many different agencies. When the individual no longer finds the great meaning and purpose of life in the family nor in the state nor in industry, he has the encounter with nothingness.

Finally the same thing can be said about religion. Organized, institutional religion, like the nation, and like the family, has lost its power to control the course of events in the life of the individual and in society. It has lost its integrity and its independence. It has become the servant of the state, the servant of the economic system, the servant of the prevailing culture. By saying it has become the servant, we mean that it adopts the values and the purposes that happen to prevail in society rather than giving to the individual, to society any great values and purposes of its own.

Thus we see driving down through history and through the life of every individual something that breaks through every order of reason, often resulting in confusion and destruction, but at the same time opening the way for reason to construct a system fit to comprehend the new horizons and thus increase the freedom, power and responsibility of man to control the conditions of his existence. When reason claims to be master and resists the demands of reconstruction imposed by the break-

through into absurdity, confusion and destruction ensue. But when reason follows as servant, a more profound and comprehensive order of life arises.

This drive that will not let man stop with any achieved construction of reason, I shall call the divine creativity operating in human life. I give it this name because of five characteristics it has.

First, it operates beyond the control of any rational system constructed by human reason.

Second, it demands that human reason be its servant and not its master, this demand appearing in the fact that confusion and ruin spread abroad when reason insists on holding to the systems it has rather than reconstructing its system to serve the new horizons.

Third, it underlies reason and generates reason. We can see this most clearly in the small child. The infant is not born with reason. It is first impelled by impulses and physiological reactions uncontrolled by reason but develops reason out of the insights thus developed. We see the same thing in the great creative originators of new systems of thought and control in ethics, in statesmanship, in science, in technology, in art, in religion, in all walks of life.

Fourth, this basic drive demands the ultimate commitment of man because it opens the way for the realization of all the constructive potentialities of human existence.

Fifth, only when we give first allegiance to this can we look down upon every system of reason with critical and challenging questions, always in readiness to transform it to fit the new situation.

This divine creativity should be distinguished from human creativity. Human creativity is what man does when he brings something new into being within the limits of what he can imagine. Man can create only what he is able to imagine. Divine creativity is what extends the limits of human imagination so that a man can be more creative than he was before.

There is a certain definite way in which divine creativity extends the reach of human imagination. It does it by a kind of interchange. One individual gets the perspective of another and integrates it into his own perspective. This enables him to imagine what he could not imagine before. When this goes on from person to person and culture to culture and age to age the resources of human imagination are enormously expanded. This has been the creative source of all the great cultures and all the great civilizations. The historic development of scientific imagination is an example. This kind of interchange between scientists now enables the scientific imagination to penetrate to the innermost elements of the atom and outward to the galaxies of stars billions of light years away. You can see the same expansion of imagination in all the arts, in politics, government and statesmanship, in economic development and industrial organization. You can see this expanding reach of imagination most intimately in the developing mind of the child.

As said before, when we commit ourselves to this divine creativity rather than to any achieved rational system, we can rise above all

our systems, so to speak, and examine them critically.

For example, if committed to this creativity we can examine our political organization and ask such a question as this: Shall we assume that any political system achieved thus far in human history, such as American democracy, is the best for all times and peoples? Or must we hold the political system that goes by the name of democracy subject to change and even radical transformation when new insights emerge out of interchange with other peoples and other cultures?

The economic question that arises when we commit ourselves to the divine creativity is this: Can we assume that capitalism, socialism, communism and fascism are the only alternative forms of a highly developed economy because reason operating within the limits of our imagination can discover no other? Or must we hold all these systems subject to transformation, and even possibly to discarding, when new insights emerge from interchange between diverse peoples now coming into close contact all over the world? Must we not rather assume that any and all of these economic systems become self-defeating and self-destructive when they produce a mental attitude that resists any new insight emerging out of interchange between communism and capitalism and the other economic systems of the world?

The religious question that arises when we commit ourselves to the divine creativity is this: Must we assume that Christianity, or any other world religion, or any com-

mon elements gathered from them all, is the final form of faith to guide and sustain the life of man? Or must we rather assume that Christianity is not final and no other established religion is final? Must we rather insist that Christianity becomes self-defeating and self-destructive when it resists new insights emerging from the divine creativity, these new insights pointing the way to a better understanding of the way for man to live? Must we not insist that when theologians try to appropriate every new development and reinterpret it to fit some traditional form of Christianity called the biblical faith, they are directing us down the road of destruction and blocking the way of our salvation?

The moral question that arises when we commit ourselves to the divine creativity is this: Can we assume that any moral ideal achieved by way of reason even the highest we can imagine is final, to be accepted as the ultimate standard for distinguishing better and worse and right and wrong? Or must we take the demands of the divine creativity as our ultimate standard, the moral ideal being always shaped and used to guide conduct in providing conditions most favorable for new insight to emerge where new situations arise.

The metaphysical question is this: Can we assume that the human imagination within the limits thus far attained is able to give us knowledge of the ultimate structure of being in all its depth and wholeness? Or must we assume that every metaphysical system simply serves to mark the limits to

which human imagination has attained up to that time? Must we, if that is true, insist that every metaphysical system becomes self-destructive and an evil monster as soon as it blocks the way to further reaches of human imagination when the divine creativity expands these reaches by new insights? This does not mean that metaphysical speculation is a waste of time. Quite the contrary is the case. It is good for the imagination to stretch itself to its limit and find out all that it can discover within these limits.

Whenever a civilization reaches a high point of power and rational order, the dominance of reason and rational idealism tends to close the mind to emergent insights requiring reconstruction of law and government, of industrial production and economic distribution, of religion and morality. At such a time people tend to set up the moral ideal instead of the divine creativity as guide and standard for criticising the established institutions. The moral ideal is simply what the established system holds to be ideal. Arnold Toynbee claims that every great civilization, when it has reached the peak of its power and rational organization, has tried to establish itself on the base of its own ideals rather than holding these ideals subject to change by insights arising out of interchange with peoples considered inferior to itself. The consequence has always been decline and downfall of that civilization.

This moment in human history is the time when Western civilization has come to the peak of power and rationality. It sets up its own

ideals as supreme and final, in opposition to the ideals of other peoples. For this reason it refuses to engage in creative interchange with the Russians and the Red Chinese, with the Negroes in our own country, and with the peoples of Africa and with all the other people of the world having ideals alien and opposed to our own. The demand is not to accept these other ideals, opposed to our own. The demand is to get the perspective of these other people and integrate that perspective with our own. Only then can we act wisely and constructively in dealing with them and in reconstructing our own institutions.

There is some indication that the Kennedy administration will try to change this; will try to induce the American people to engage in this kind of interchange with Communists and all the others. Whether the American people will go along with this effort we do not know. But one thing we do know. If the American people will not go along our day is done. By that I do not mean necessarily atomic war, although of course that also may come. But apart from war, if we do not go along we shall steadily decline in power of control and will be absorbed into the comet's tail of whatever new civilization shall arise to take the place of leadership once held by us.

Now, what does all this have to do with existentialism? What I have been saying is the meaning of existentialism in the sense that existentialism is the symptom rising to the surface of our culture indicating this critical condition of our civilization, much as a rash on

the skin is a symptom revealing the condition of small pox. The existentialists all testify that man's fate is determined ultimately not by reason but by something else. What this something else is they do not clearly articulate nor interpret. But they expose it. In that way they expose the problem. That is their contribution. That is the meaning of existentialism.

The existentialists all unite in asking one question. What can I find to live for that will make life worth living when I cast off the sovereign control of reason? The

meaning of existentialism is this question. I have proposed an answer. The answer is: Take reason off the throne but do not banish reason. Give ultimate commitment to the divine creativity that operates in human life to expand beyond any known limit what man can appreciate as good and distinguish as evil by moving dangerously through periods of confusion and reconstruction. Reason should always follow along to bring under control the new development brought forth by divine creativity under expanding horizons.



Professionals or Volunteers to Direct the Finance Canvass?

A successful finance canvass does not require a professional to run it. All that is necessary for a good canvass that is conducted by volunteers is to have one layman in the church who is (a) thoroughly trained in how to conduct canvasses, and who is (b) able to give the church about a month of his time to set the canvass up, and run it.

The United Appeal holds several seminars around the country each year, training laymen in how to conduct canvasses. Any church that wants a corps of trained canvassers can get them, simply by sending laymen to these seminars.

Ideal potentials for such training are (a) good business men in their late 60s who have recently retired, and (b) competent women with management abilities whose children are grown, so that they have free time to give to the church.

Failing a trained leader who has the time to manage a canvass, any church that needs an appreciable amount of money (for a building, or big repair job, for instance) would be wise to seriously consider employing a professional. A good one is sure to raise many thousand dollars more than an amateur who does not know the very technical methods of canvassing, and who tries to run a canvass with the tag ends of his time. All a good canvass takes is "know-how," plus a great deal of time.

—RR

THE MINISTER AND THE MESSIAH

WEBSTER L. KITCHELL

Once upon a time there was a young man who decided that he knew what was wrong with the world. So he went out and began to preach. He walked all over the world as far as he knew it, and he told people that the end was coming — and soon. He told them to get ready. Some people liked the idea. Others didn't, and they said so. The young man was annoyed at those who didn't believe him. He *knew* that the world was coming to an end. He had very sharp words for those who didn't believe it. He said, "They who are not for me are against me!" The more he preached the more he believed that what he preached was the word of God, and that he had been chosen to reveal it. Finally he became so convinced that he was the Messiah that he braved the reactionaries in their own stronghold, confident that God would support him. He was crucified.

The story goes on to say that he arose from the dead, and that someday, *someday*, he shall return and the end of the world will really come about. In the meantime something approaching 2,000 years have gone by and the world as a whole still refuses to take the young man seriously. There are still wars, there are still family quarrels, there are still stupid people, there are still persecutions, much of it in his name. There is still kindness and goodness, much of it not in his name. And there are still those who emulate the young man, who preach that they have the Word From On High.

In fact the woods and the city streets are full of messiahs. On the radios and advertised outside the camp meetings are the signs of the second coming. A hundred voices tell us the one sure way to salvation, and it adds up to a hundred different ways. We are used to it. We are Unitarians, and we don't take much stock in messiahs. And perhaps that's why we fail to see the messiahs in our

midst. As Walt Kelley says, we do not know the stranger within our own skin.

At a Metropolitan Conference in New York City there was a heated debate about the propriety of the Unitarian denomination taking positions on "political" questions. One delegate arose and said in effect, "Well there are *some* social questions which all Unitarians can agree on. Certainly we are all in favor of integration!" And I thought of a lifelong Unitarian I'd met three weeks before while driving to Florida, a man of prominence in his congregation and an ardent church worker, who was as opposed to integration as I am to segregation. And I began to wonder if we had not all unconsciously come to the point where some of us are willing to say, "He who is not with us on integration cannot be one of us, for we are pure and righteous altogether."

And then I attended a ceremony in Boston celebrating merger of our denominations. It was impressively staged, and the message

seemed to be that we were the chosen redeemers of a factionalized world. We were God's answer to the limited vision of the Christians, the Moslems, the Buddhists, and the Jews. I regret to report that the Almighty did not arrange for the heavens to declare his blessings upon the venture; it poured rain and this delegate got very wet.

I attend meetings of the brethren and I follow their activities in print. Again and again I see how they have brought religion in the form of social action to their communities. And again and again they emphasize the forces ranged against them; how many there were and how powerful. So many brave young Davids and so many Goliaths. I begin to wonder if we have a congregation anywhere who lives in fellowship together and in amity with their neighbors.

In our new collection of readings is one that struck me for its brave nonconformity. I wonder if it will often be read from our pulpits. It is by Eric Hoffer, and it reads in part: "It is easier to love humanity as a whole than to love one's neighbor. There may even be a certain antagonism between love of humanity and love of neighbor. A low capacity for getting along with those near us often goes hand in hand with a high receptivity to the idea of the brotherhood of man."

Many Unitarians have rejected one abstraction, God, and become Messiahs of another abstraction, Mankind. And because the individuals around them are cool to the idea, they become more con-

vinced than ever that they are right. Before long they claim to have The Truth That Sets Men Free.

To me it is a cold and dreary truth. And so I suppose I am one that, not being for them, is against them. But it's not that I'm against them. It's just that I think that there is a better way. I think that we have to minister to the individuals of our parish in all *their* diversity and not try to purge them. If there are enough people at work on the details of the various good and spiritually fulfilling lives, then the Master Plan will take care of itself.

Some think that I am a conservative, and I suppose that I am by Unitarian standards. I'd rather listen to a sincere Christian discuss the Incarnation than hear a Unitarian discuss the rational Utopia which would emerge if we just wouldn't be so human. The Christian is discussing a *life* and its relationship to other *lives*. But the Unitarian speaks reverently of Life — which is an abstraction. Abstractions are dead things. That's why would-be messiahs like them. They can't talk back. The Unitarian who speaks piously of Life usually has no interest in *me* unless I will sign his petition, be on his side, on the side of Goodness and Righteousness.

But I'm glad some of the brethren are this way. Some of my best friends are messiahs. When I meet one I go home and have a little heart-to-heart talk with myself. Just to remind myself that I am a minister, not a messiah.

PERUSING THE JOURNALS

DAVID B. PARKE

Within weeks after the election of President Kennedy (a religious as well as political event of the first importance), a new focus for religious discussion appeared in the Blake proposal for Protestant church union. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, executive officer of the United Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A., on December 4, 1960 proposed "to the Protestant Episcopal Church that it together with the United Presbyterian Church . . . invite the Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ to form with us a plan of church union both catholic and reformed." The setting of this pronouncement, San Francisco's Grace Episcopal Church, and the time, the Sunday preceding the triennial assembly of the National Council of Churches, gave added drama and significance to Dr. Blake's words, the text of which appears in *The New York Times*, the *Christian Century* and elsewhere.

Moved by "the conviction that Jesus Christ . . . wills his Church to be one," and by the fact of "a tragically divided church [in] a tragically divided world," Dr. Blake set forth among the principles of the new union the following: it must be "both reformed and catholic"; it must "have visible and historical continuity with the Church of all ages before and after the Reformation, . . . [including] a ministry which by its orders and ordination is recognized as widely as possible by all other Christian bodies"; it must "clearly confess

the historic trinitarian faith" contained in the Apostles and Nicene creeds; it must "administer the two sacraments, instituted by Christ, the Lord's Supper . . . and Baptism"; it must "accept the principle of continuing reformation under the Word of God by the guidance of the Holy Spirit"; it must be "truly democratic in its government"; it must "seek in a new way to recapture the brotherhood and sense of fellowship of all its members and ministers" (i.e. the abandonment of ecclesiastical titles, for example); it must "find the way to include within its catholicity (and because of it) a wide diversity of theological formulation of the faith and a variety of worship and liturgy including worship that is nonliturgical."

With the passage of time, while getting accustomed to the President of the United States attending mass on Sunday, American Protestants including religious liberals, have expressed themselves on the Blake proposal and related concerns.

The first comment was from Dr. James A. Pike, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of California. "Just as Dr. Blake has not spoken officially for his church, I cannot speak officially for mine. But as a bishop in the historic succession, which the preacher regards as an element in the united church, I can say that his prophetic proclamation is the most sound and inspiring proposal for the unity of the church in this country which

has ever been made. . . . I hope . . . that definite action toward its fulfillment will soon be forthcoming" (*Christian Century*, Dec. 21, 1960). Dr. Pike's suggestion elsewhere in the same magazine that "in this country we [Episcopalians have] moved clearly from a monarchical episcopate to a constitutional episcopate" gives a clue to one possible solution to the problem of polity within a reunited Protestantism: a democratic episcopate.

Martin E. Marty, proposing another area of agreement, adopts a suggestion by the Rev. Gustave Weigel, S. J. for the reformation of Protestantism away from divisive denominationalism toward modal [sic] orders in the pattern of the orders of Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits, etc. within Roman Catholicism (*Christian Century*, Dec. 28).

The question of an ecumenical ministry is considered by an Episcopal minister, William A. Eddy, Jr., in correspondence with a United Church of Christ minister, Walter D. Wagoner (*Christian Century*, Jan. 4). Mr. Eddy, while seeing "no logical or even theological reason why Episcopal, Presbyterian, Lutheran churches and the United Church of Christ should not find ways of expressing and implementing a unity which includes mutual recognition of ministries and which is rooted in a common life and faith," declines to accept Mr. Wagoner's specific proposal of "parity of ministries and intercommunion at the Lord's Table."

Alongside Mr. Eddy's caution may be placed the definition of church unity by the Commission on Faith and Order of the World

Council of Churches, an ideal unity "which brings all in each place who confess Christ Jesus as Lord into a fully committed fellowship with one another through one baptism into Him, holding one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel and breaking the one bread, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all; and which at the same time unites them with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that ministry and members are acknowledged by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls the Church" (*Ecumenical Review*, Oct., 1960).

The reluctance of Episcopalians to agree to episcopal or sacramental compromise is rooted in their claim that, of all Protestant bodies, only they belong in the historic apostolic succession (the latter being interrupted when Henry VIII assumed dominion over the Church of England). Far more formidable, in any discussion of larger Protestant-Catholic unity, is the Catholic position respecting the authority of the Protestant clergy.

In *Theological Studies* (Dec. 1960), the Rev. Avery Dulles, S.J. of Woodstock College states with precision the Catholic view. Preaching, he writes, is "the public proposal of the word of God in the name of the Church." The preaching office is basically prophetic: "The prophet . . . is one who speaks in obedience to a call, or mission, received from God." This mission is given by the Church which speaks for God: Christ vested in the apostles "the total responsi-

bility for the propagation of the gospel"; "the episcopal college, as the successor of the apostolic college, has inherited the plenitude of its transmissible functions." Therefore "the fulness of the preaching power is and necessarily remains proper to the [Roman Catholic] episcopate."

One possible conclusion to be drawn from this logic is that Protestants, lacking an apostolically-determined mission, are pseudo or false preachers. The author cites Catholics who make this charge. He himself does not, preferring a more charitable and realistic view. How, then, does Protestant preaching approximate Christian truth? Fr. Dulles mentions Holy Scripture, the writings of the church fathers, and the papal encyclicals as "echoes of authorized preaching" which affect Protestant laymen. Faith and charity, baptism and confirmation, although again imperfect by Catholic standards, enhance the spiritual status of Protestants.

As for Protestant preaching itself, it possesses in the Catholic view greater authority today than in Luther's original conception of an undifferentiated lay priesthood of believers. The variegated and ambiguous character of ordination weakens Protestants, however. It is the prophetic quality of certain Protestant preaching that gives it spiritual efficacy: Wesley, Kierkegaard, Grundtvig and Karl Barth are cited in illustration of the principle that "The spirit of prophesy, when it appears, testifies in favor of the true faith." Other factors which, in a strictly relative sense, legitimate Protestant preaching are

call, preparation and ordination, status in the religious community, and pastoral capacity. "While Protestantism is undoubtedly displeasing to God in so far as it diverges from Catholic truth and unity, it by no means follows that God does not wish there to be salutary ministries within Protestantism."

"All of these factors," concludes Fr. Dulles, "can lend spiritual power to the Protestant witness. But none of them alone, nor all of them taken together, amount to a valid apostolic ministry."

Additional comments on the "ecumenical dialogue" come from a Methodist bishop and a Unitarian minister. Gerald Kennedy (*Christian Century*, Feb. 8, 1961) argues that religious diversity is more productive than religious unity. "I am of the opinion that, generally speaking, Protestantism has been less effective in its organic unions than in its separateness and unity through councils and cooperation. I am not willing to cast aside what has proved to be effective in spite of many obvious weaknesses for a theory which has proved to be short on results where it has been tested [he cites Canada and post-war Japan]."

Ronald Mazur of Stow, Mass. contributes a distinctive formulation of Christian affirmation ("Unitarians and the Dialogue," *Christian Century*, Feb. 15) embracing Jesus Christ (dogmatic), Jesus as the Christ (historical), Jesus as a Christ (universalistic), and Jesus as my Christ (existential). It is the last category which creates religious community. Mazur states the

central problem of religion to be that of maintaining "the integrity and existential relevance of our Christ-event while neither forsaking its universal application nor belittling the sacredness of the other faiths of the world. It is at this point that I believe Unitarian Christianity has a vital contribution to make to the life of catholic Christianity, for in it particularity is no longer seen as a scandal . . ." On the ground that "it is useless and foolish to harangue others who have a different Christ or who have not yet committed themselves to any Christ," the author advocates that "Christian missions to other faiths for the sake of conversion be abandoned," and concludes that "while we can know religious truth only as a Christian or a Jew or a Buddhist, . . . we can so act in this life according to what we do

know that the corresponding insights in the other religions will be encouraged to develop on their own and within their own relevant cultural context."

An illuminating article on the same theme comes from the pen of Paul Tillich ("On the Boundary Line," *Christian Century*, Dec. 7, 1960). Tillich's recent experiences in the Far East have strengthened, he says, his "conviction that within the narrower concept of religion, describing it in its concrete existence, a larger concept is implied which transcends the concrete existence of any religion."

Finally, as a case study in the problems and possibilities of the transcendence of "concrete existence," Winston L. King's autobiographical "Experience in Buddhist Meditation" appears in *The Journal of Religion* (Jan. 1961).



There can be no reliable faith for free men unless there are faithful men and women who form the faith into beliefs, who test and criticize the beliefs and who then transform and transmit the beliefs. This process of forming and transforming the beliefs of the free faith is a process of discussion; it is a co-operative endeavor in which men surrender to the commanding, transforming reality. The only way in which men can reliably form and transform beliefs is through the sharing of tradition and new insights and through the co-operative criticism and testing of tradition and insight. In other words, men must sincerely work with each other in order to give reliable form and expression to faith. This is the only way in which freedom from tyranny can be fulfilled in freedom with justice and truth.

—James Luther Adams

ARJUNA AS A KNIGHT OF FAITH

JOHN M. MORRIS

Some 500 to 1000 years separate the *Bhagavad Gita* from the very ancient hymns of the Rig-Veda. Written at some time between the fifth and the second century B.C., it overlaps in time the sophisticated speculations of the *Upanishads*, but it comes from a more popular, "earthy" source. Its name means "The Divine Song" or "The Song of God." It forms an interlude in another scripture, the *Mahabharata*, the longest epic poem in the world.

The *Gita* is the prelude to a major battle between two warring clans. It opens at the moment when Arjuna, a member of the warrior caste who has previously displayed his courage and skill in battle, decides that he cannot fight. The coming conflict, for which everyone is prepared, would involve killing some of his close relatives, who are fighting on the other side. This Arjuna refuses to do.

Krishna, his chariot driver, in order to encourage his master, proceeds to explain to him a whole philosophy of existence and of action. Before long, the driver stands revealed as an incarnation of the god Vishnu, preserver of the earth; he soon incorporates also the attributes of Brahma, the creator, and Shiva, the destroyer, merging these at last in Brahman, the universal soul. As the *Gita* comes to an end, Arjuna at last understands the cosmic significance of the battle and goes forth to conquer.

sympathetic understanding of the *Gita*, and until recently I found them insuperable. In this paper, I want to consider three of these difficulties and indicate possible solutions to them.

First, the apparently crude way in which Krishna urges Arjuna to enter the battle, in the face of his understandable reluctance about killing his relatives, has seemed to me something less than admirable.

Second, the situation is scarcely improved by Krishna's argument that wars and killing really don't matter because — he claims — everything in this world is imaginary. The only reality, he says, is "spirit." This sounds too much like a "pie in the sky" philosophy of escape from the world.

Finally, and perhaps most important, few of us admire a system that aims exclusively at contentment or "peace of mind." A Socrates unsatisfied, we say, is better than a pig satisfied. Rather than the *Gita's* teaching of detachment, we preach engagement in politics, social action, and the like.

Albert Schweitzer's view of the *Gita* as "world and life negation" in which "there is really no killing and no being killed" would substantiate his dismissal of the *Gita* as "not merely the most read but also the most idealized book in world literature."

Yet I find that it need not be

¹ Schweitzer, Albert, *INDIAN THOUGHT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1957, p. 185.

² *Ibid.*, p. 189.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

There are many obstacles to a

interpreted as a message of escape from the world. It seems to me — in what I must admit is a very personal reaction — that it can lead people back into a more fruitful relationship with the realities of nature, society and themselves.

It has surprised me to find that the *Gita* is not an all-out apology for war, and that it preaches anything but a crude nationalism. As Aurobindo rather defensively points out, such an interpretation “may be the teaching of a State, of politicians, of lawyers, of ethical casuists; it can never be the teaching of a great religious and philosophical Scripture which sets out to solve the problem of life and action from the very roots.”⁴

Arjuna's refusal to fight does not come because he has suddenly become a pacifist. He cannot simply slough off the duties of his caste. His refusal comes rather because he sees that if he carries out his duty as a warrior, he will be violating another duty — he will be fighting against members of his own family. His extreme anguish and confusion are the expression of the hopeless dilemma of a man who has been taught all his life to take orders, and who is now presented with conflicting orders. His position is exactly like that of the rats who have been driven insane in laboratory experiments. He cannot carry out one set of orders without violating the other; and the resulting conflict is too much for him: “My limbs sink down,/ And my mouth becomes parched,/ And

there is trembling in my body,/ And my hair stands on end. . . . And my skin, too, is burning.”⁵

The last detail reminds us of Job; the parallel does not end with the burning skin. Job has also been taught a rule of action. He has been taught that if you obey the Torah, you'll get rich. (“Therefore be careful to do the words of this covenant, that you may prosper in all that you do.” Deut. 29:9) The extreme anguish that Job suffers is not so much due to the skin disease and the loss of property as to the failure of his rule, his way of life. He was good, but he wasn't rewarded.

Both Job and Arjuna, then, have run into the absurd, the discovery of that “thickness and strangeness of the world”⁶ in contrast with the rational simplicity of their rules.

Arjuna's first response to Krishna's attempt to instruct him in the meaning of the absurd is to ask for another rule: “So tell me one thing definitely,/ Whereby I may attain welfare.”

It seems to me that the message of the *Gita* is Krishna's response to this demand. His message is that man must not suppose that life can be put into a nutshell, and that when man tries to tie life down to any simple scheme or formula, he is bound to run into trouble. In Arjuna's conflict between his duty as a warrior and his duty as a son, Krishna is *not* saying that he should simply put his duty as a warrior

⁵ BHAGAVAD GITA, Translated and Interpreted by Franklin Edgerton, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1952. 1.29-30

⁶ Camus, Albert. LE MYTHE DE SISYPHE, Gallimard, Paris, 1942, p. 29. (“... cette épaïsseur cette étrangeté du monde, c'est l'absurde.”)

⁷ GITA, III.2.

⁴ Aurobindo, Sri, ESSAYS ON THE GITA, Sri Aurobindo Library, Inc., New York, 1950, p. 31.

first. He is saying that there is no possible way of resolving the two duties. The conflict is ultimate and unresolvable on the level of rules, doctrines and duties. It can only be transcended, by going beyond all the rules, to the source from which the rules themselves come.

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This source is not, however, a "pie in the sky." I find it unnecessary to conceive it in supernaturalist or idealist terms at all, but as the factor of discontinuity or creativity in the evolution of nature, society and thought. Creativity is a process, not a thing. It may produce a new painting, but it is not that painting itself. It may produce a new law or a new society, but it is not that law or society. It may produce a new way of life, but it is not identified with any particular way of life. The central distinction in the *Gita*, it seems to me, is not between "spirit" and "matter" but between the creative process and created things.

From this point of view, Krishna speaks as a symbol of that creative process itself, not as an anthropoid deity. "I am the origin of all; From Me all comes forth."⁸ "By Me is pervaded all this/ Universe, by Me in the form of the unmanifest. . . . Supporter of beings, and not resting in beings,/ Is My Self, that causes beings to be."⁹

But creation, personified in Brahma, cannot be separated from the processes symbolized by Vishnu, the preserver, and Shiva, the destroyer. "I send forth again and again/ This whole host of beings,/ Which is powerless, by the power

of (My) material nature."¹⁰ "Of creations the beginning and the end,/ And the middle too am I . . . I am death that carries off all."¹¹ Life itself, in order to create, must destroy other created things. All new creations—a new chemical compound, a new social system, a new machine, a new thought—sweep away all the old created structures in their wake (although the old structures may in some way be incorporated into the new). In its use of the energy required for its maintenance and advance, life is an extravagantly destructive process.

If we are to enter into creativity itself, we must be willing to see the destruction of old forms of action, old structures of thought, old meanings that may have become very dear to us. This is a frightening possibility. Arjuna is afraid that if he should fight, there would be terrible results—families broken, traditional rites forgotten, mixing of races, general confusion.¹²

Krishna's answer is a difficult one. He certainly does not say that it is a good thing to go ahead and kill one's father, just as he does not say that it is a good thing to quit the fight. His answer is that we must live according to our own understanding of life's purposes and life's duties, but that this understanding is never perfect. Our ethical laws are among the created things of this world that are eventually destroyed in the continuing revolutionary action of the creative process. They are never absolute.

Krishna advises his master to

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, IX.8.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, X.32, 34.

¹² *Ibid.*, I.40-43.

⁸ *Ibid.*, X.8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, IX.4-5.

give his attachment to a rule-book morality. Ultimately, he will have to make his decisions for himself. Only the creative process itself, the source of all rules, will give him an answer. Allegiance to the creative process is not an escape from the world but an entry into it.

Nor is it a cheap road to "peace of mind." Instead, Krishna says that once you have chosen, enter into the action with all your heart. Everything you do must be an act or worship, something to which you give yourself completely.¹⁸ If Arjuna is to be a warrior, let him be one with all his heart. If he fights badly, he will only be a poor soldier, not a good pacifist.

This is a dangerous concept, but there is one thing more dangerous than a wholehearted warrior (as the record of certain units in the Korean War makes clear), and that is a halfhearted warrior.

In its insistence that every creative effort may be accompanied by the destruction of created things, Krishna's teaching may seem cruel; but there is a worse evil. By *clinging* to old forms and created things as if they were the only good, by clinging to our prejudices, our habits, our possessions, we make them demonic. It is not that the old ways were not good; it is simply that when we cling to them they become silt in the rivers of creativity, leading eventually to disaster. Lucifer, brightest of the angels, became king of the demons; and all the devils, according to the old myth, were once angels in heaven. In the

same way, we make demons out of our greatest goods by clinging to them to the point that they are destroyers. The mother who wants to cling to her child as it is, to keep it forever as her own little darling, will destroy both the child and the adult that the child might have become. And when that "child," that "created thing," becomes a theory in the hands of an Adolph Hitler or a Joseph Stalin, who will cling to the theory though it destroys the world, then we see the fury of the revenge against which the *Gita* warns.

Far from being a message of contentment, the meaning of the *Gita* may be something like this: Man must live by what little he knows, and life's meaning is something that he can see only dimly, as in a fog. He must fill in those dim outlines to fit his understanding. But he must not suppose that his own conjectures are the reality itself. He must be prepared for a time when man's meanings must give way before the existent world. Above all, man must keep his eyes open. He cannot close his eyes, like Job's comforters, insisting that the old traditions are true in spite of evidence. He cannot, like certain political groups, kill all those that disagree with him. He cannot even, like Arjuna, throw himself on the ground in despair. There is no escape from life; it must be lived. Man must enter into life with his whole heart, holding nothing back.

After his dialogue with Krishna, Arjuna re-enters the battle. As Kierkegaard has noted, "after having made the movements of infinity, (faith) makes those of

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, III.9.

finiteness."¹⁴ The Knight of Faith does not live in "another world." He lives wholeheartedly in this world. There is, in fact, nothing which outwardly distinguishes him from other men; if you saw him, Kierkegaard says, you'd say, "Good Lord, is this the man? Is it really he? Why, he looks like a tax-collector!"¹⁵

And yet he is not a *mere* tax-collector, just as Arjuna is not a *mere* soldier. He is in fact a perpetual rebel against all fixed forms and settled systems. Once fixed, a system is dead, and a man caught in it is like a fly in amber. The Knight of Faith may love it as a memory of the past, but he loves it only as he loves other dead things: for what it has been, not for what it is. The only thing that deserves his ultimate allegiance is not a "thing" at all. It is the life process itself.

The *Gita* thus stands at the opposite pole from those that would have man "renounce the world" if he is to become holy. In fact, it raises serious doubts about the religious motivations of those who, Schweitzerlike, feel themselves "called to full-time Christian service." We may even inquire whether Schweitzer himself is not guilty of "world and life negation."

Rather than adopting the external trappings of religion, man must, according to the *Gita*, adopt the attitude of basic allegiance to the

creative process. Churches often seem to insist that the best people are those who renounce their families and become missionaries to the Eskimos — or those who quit their jobs as salesmen and become liberal ministers. Nothing could be farther from the *Gita's* teaching. There is no task that cannot be performed as an act of worship. Thus detachment from created things may become engagement in life itself.

I have dealt briefly with three objections to the *Gita* and indicated in a very personal way the manner in which these difficulties might be resolved.

First, it seemed to me that the arguments which encouraged Arjuna to re-enter the battle were not based upon a simple militarism, but upon the recognition that all ethical codes are finite and that man must eventually make a personal choice, based upon his own creative resources.

Second, it did not seem to me that the *Gita* is tied to a mystical supernaturalism, as distinguished from an illusory material world, but upon the distinction between relatively transient created *things*, and the creative *process*, which creates, sustains, and eventually destroys them.

Finally, it did not seem to me that the "detachment" at which the *Gita* aims is based upon renunciation of the world but upon wholehearted entry into it.

¹⁴ Kierkegaard, Sören, FEAR AND TREMBLING and THE SICKNESS UNTO DEATH, Doubleday-Anchor, Garden City, 1954, p. 43.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49.



THE INTEGRATED MAN

JAMES R. WENDOVER

A sermon delivered to the First Unitarian Church
Dallas, Texas, on Laymen's League Sunday, March 12, 1961.

I might preface my remarks by saying that the opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of my sponsor, The Laymen's League.

Ever since I have been a Unitarian, which is for almost ten years now, I have been curious as to what a Unitarian really is. Another way of putting it is, why did I join the Unitarian Church? We must feel that the Unitarian Church offers something, or else we would not have joined it, pledged our money to it and attended its services.

I suppose the great value of this church is its atmosphere of freedom. There is reputedly no doctrine; this is an illusion, with which I will deal later. It is accurate to state, however, that there is no *requirement* or *compulsion* that you believe *anything*. You may believe anything you like and you need not believe *in* anything at all. This freedom to believe, which perhaps is our church's greatest asset, is also in my opinion its greatest liability, in its lack of requirement that you believe *in* something.

I would not for a minute jeopardize your right to believe as you wish. I would only insist that, having the *right* to believe as you wish, you do in fact exercise that right and *do believe*. Freedom of thought necessarily implies that you *must think*; and *having thought*, you must arrive at a conclusion and come to a decision; and having come to a decision, act with all your might *in accordance with that decision*.

In spite of what some theologians may say, I believe that a church is a man-made institution. It is frequently said that its function, as an institution, whether God-made or man-made, is to symbolize man's highest ideals, his highest aspirations and his most basic and fundamental beliefs. In my opinion, however, it must do more than just symbolize these things. To be an effective institution it must do everything in its power to assist and support man in understanding

what those ideals, aspirations and beliefs are, and further, it must do everything within its power, it must use all of the influence that it can bring to bear, to *insist* that man *achieve* those ideals and those aspirations and in fact live in accordance with those beliefs.

There have been many crimes committed against man by the church as an institution, or committed by criminals aided and abetted by the church and churchgoers. I say this without any particular rancor because man commits and permits many foolish crimes against himself; to my mind the fact that the church also participates in these homicidal and suicidal acts only emphasizes what a man-made institution the church really is, with all of man's faults and all of his virtues. The only reason for the existence of the church at all—any church—is to help man to be aware of and to

have the courage to exercise his virtues, and to be aware of and to have the courage to overcome his faults. Unless it in fact does these things, then we are wasting our time in belonging to it, pledging our money to it and attending its services. Unless it leads, guides, inspires and *insists* upon action in accordance with belief, it is a meaningless institution, a repository for dead objects, little crosses, corny statues and empty ceremonies.

The danger of the church as an institution—including this church—is that it allows symbolism of great ideals without insisting its members live up to those ideals. It allows a man to present to the world a false front; he can pretend to be, to believe that he is, and in fact be accepted as a Christian, and still be allowed to do decidedly un-Christlike things. This is a form of religious schizophrenia, which the church itself has frequently encouraged and participated in. How else does one explain religious wars, the Inquisition, the burning of the witches? How else explain how the church allows wars, totalitarianism and police states to exist at all? Where were the Christians when a handful of Nazi sadists were taking over Germany? Well, they were probably either passively counting their beads or actively participating in the Nazi riots. And for that matter, where were the Unitarians? Exercising their freedom of thought, no doubt—but not for long.

I spent some time in the reference books trying to find out what a Unitarian really is. There is no point in kidding ourselves—we

are as doctrinaire as any other religious group. There is a *reason* why we select this church in preference to any other, a *reason* why we pledge our money and our time to it and attend its ceremonies. We have ideals, aspirations and beliefs in common and *these common beliefs are our doctrine*.

It is a sickness to play peeka-boo with our fundamental beliefs—now you see them, now you don't. Because if you pretend that they don't exist,* then you do not have to live up to them. This is the sickness of our church.

I was appalled at the peeka-booism of our Unitarian scholars apparent in the reference books, and I quote from one of them, a professor of philosophy and theology at Harvard, writing on the history of Unitarianism in the *Encyclopedia Americana*. He states of course that the Unitarian Church has no creed. He then uses eight pages of double-columned fine print to tell what that creed is, all the while denying that it exists. I do not want to be too hard on the good professor. He plays the traditional Unitarian game of hide-and-seek.

He points out that Unitarianism, as opposed to Trinitarianism, actually preceded Christianity. What he is actually referring to is, of course, not Unitarianism, but monotheism, which has existed as long as man. Parenthetically I might say that it is a quaint old custom of this church to adopt people as Unitarians long after they are dead, when it is safe to do so, when it is not risky or controversial to do so. I think it is, at least, correct to say that Unitari-

ans do not believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, or at least I never met one who did. But would you not agree that Unitarians are generally monotheistic in belief, and is this not part of our doctrine? We may qualify our monotheism by saying, "With our limited knowledge of the Universe, and our awareness of its immensity, we do not *know* whether something called God exists." But we do know, within the limits of our limited knowledge, that the Universe generally is a unified, integrated Universe, and that man, and each man, is a unified, integrated organism within the Universe. God is a little bit imperfect, perhaps, and the Universe and man likewise. He allows you, while substantially like me, to be different from me in many ways. (At this point you are no doubt muttering to yourself, "Thank you, God.") He allows the earth to spin around on its axis, but not always exactly at the same speed; and it revolves around the sun and the sun in its galaxy, and so on; but not always exactly at the same speed.

So, there are imperfections. Man and each man is not always a unified and integrated organism, and depending on the extent he is not, he gets sick, and he dies. The important point here in this phase of our doctrine — and I insist that it is a doctrine — is not so much the monotheism, the Unity (from which the word Unitarian is derived) or the Universality, but the *identity* and the *unitedness* of each person *with and as a part of mankind and the entire Universe*. In the Mental Health Association we observe frequently that most com-

mon symptom of mental illness — the withdrawal of the mentally disturbed from the human race and from God and Universe — and with the return to mental health comes the rejoinder and reidentification of self with humanity and everything around. Man is undeniably an integrated organism within and as a part of an integrated Universe. This is Point One in the Unitarian Doctrine. It leads naturally to Point Two.

It is frequently said, in traditional Unitarian fashion, that the Unitarian Church takes no position with respect to the divinity of Christ. I submit to you that this church as an institution and every Unitarian in it would agree fundamentally with the statement that if Christ was not divine, he was at least divinely human. This is Point Two in the Unitarian Doctrine. As an exceptionally integrated human (at least), Christ held an exceptionally integrated set of beliefs with regard to himself and his relation to fellow human beings, for which beliefs he was willing to die, if need be. To compromise those beliefs in order to live was to him unthinkable, and so he died.

The importance of Point Two is not only the, at least symbolical, divinity of Christ, as symbolizing, in my opinion, the divinity of Man himself, and the identity and unity of Man with God and the Universe; but also the equally important point that Christ held a set of beliefs of the highest order, for which he was willing, if need be, to die.

This leads me to Point Three.

Point Three in the Unitarian Doctrine — which we deny is a

doctrine—is that Man to be an integrated organism as a part of an integrated Universe must have a set of integrated beliefs for which he is willing, if need be, to die. Why do we point to one Mr. Michael Servetus as one of our idols? Mr. Servetus was burned at the stake for denying that God was a Trinity and instead was a Unity, and for resisting tyranny with all his might and his life. Why do Unitarians insist that most of the signers of the Declaration of Independence—one of the greatest of all human *doctrines*—were Unitarians? I doubt if Mr. Servetus had ever heard of the Unitarian Church as such, and the same is probably true of many of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Now, Points One and Two of the Unitarian Doctrine are nice, safe, noncontroversial Unitarian beliefs, at least noncontroversial as between Unitarians. It is quite possible to hold firmly to the proposition that God is a nice, sweet man, head of a fairly tidy household, and that Christ symbolizes what a nice, sweet man God is, and isn't the world a lovely place to live in?

Well, for the great majority of the human population of the earth, the world is not a lovely place to live in and I frequently wonder why they bother to live at all. The reason why the world is not a lovely place to live in is that people of good will everywhere are willing to stop with Points One and Two. Until each and every human being on this planet is willing to proceed to Point Three, the world will not be a lovely place to live in for the

majority of Earthmen, and they might as well be dead.

Point Three of the Unitarian Doctrine—which I insist is our doctrine if we will be honest with ourselves—is that man to be an integrated organism as a part of an integrated Universe, must have a set of integrated beliefs, from which he must *never* deviate, with which he must *never* compromise, and for which he must be willing, if need be, to die.

Point Three is strong medicine. I had great difficulty with it and avoided it for weeks in preparing this talk. Because now I must go on and state what that set of beliefs *must necessarily be*, and what is worse, apply them to myself. That "set of beliefs," consistent with what I call my "Unitarian Doctrine of Integration," is really only *one* belief. Difficult as it is to be totally honest, its compensation is that there is a great unburdening, a great relief in the frank recognition of a fundamental Truth (which I deliberately spell with a capital "T" without apology) which exists between all men, each with the other, for so long as man shall live, and which must necessarily exist *without violation* if man is to survive. That Truth is as follows:

Each man on this planet is—simply because he is a man—endowed with certain *inalienable* human rights of which he may never be deprived *without his consent*. Now there is nothing new about this belief; it is a paraphrase of part of the Declaration of Independence. Do Unitarians really believe this? I think they do, but are careful not to admit it, lest they have to live in accordance with it.

Who are the saints of the Unitarian Church, recognized as such, of course, in traditional Catholic and Unitarian fashion, only long after death? Servetus is of course one, burned at the stake in 1525 for his resistance to tyranny. The signers of the Declaration of Independence, and particularly its drafter, have practically all been adopted as saints of the Unitarian Church after death. These now-Unitarian signers of the Declaration of Independence did not die for their stated Unitarian doctrine because England was busy with other wars and felt guilty about the whole deal anyway. But they were *willing* to die for it.

This church's doctrine of not having a doctrine has never really existed, except as a rationalization to avoid the total implication of Point Three, which is so difficult to live with and so impossible to live without.

So I believe we really do believe Point Three of our doctrine. But consistent with the responsibility of freedom of thought, which to remain free, necessarily requires that we do in fact think, and having thought, decide, and having decided, act *only* in accordance with the decision, and *never* violate it, we must of necessity apply it to our daily lives.

I cannot spell out for you all of the applications of this basic principle. As free men we must exercise our own mature judgment on many occasions in deciding when a violation of our basic rights, or those of another, so threatens our own freedom that we are willing, if need be, to die in defense of it or in defense of another. There are

certain obvious issues, however — I love the application of this time-worn phrase here — which are *black and white*.

An obvious application of the basic principle as stated by Point Three of the Unitarian Doctrine is that there is *no* place — I repeat — *no* place in American society for degrees or classes of citizenship. *Every* American citizen (a) because he is a *man* and (b) because he is a *citizen*, has the *same* rights and privileges insofar as *all* public tax-supported institutions are concerned, including government, school and courthouse.

There are those in this audience who will not agree with this application of Point Three. To those people I say frankly I do not see how you can live in harmony with yourself as an integrated person in an integrated Universe if you disagree with this application. I do not jeopardize your right and privilege as a free man to discriminate among all people for the purpose of selecting on an individual basis which few shall be your friends and which one you shall marry. But you certainly will insist to the death if necessary on the application of Point Three to yourself. You must necessarily insist on its application to every other citizen and every other human being. To the extent that you exercise tyranny over another, then you justify his tyranny over you, which he will most certainly exercise at the very earliest opportunity, and is right now getting well prepared to exercise it.

A second obvious application of Point Three is merely an extension of the application just referred to.

The second obvious application is that there is simply *no* place in the world today for the existence of tyranny in *any* form, whether that tyranny be exercised in the name of religion, British or French colonial imperialism or Russian-Chinese communism, or in the mind of the Old South.* I repeat: there is *no* place in the world today for tyranny in *any* form. And to the extent to which you and I allow it to continue to exist, then to the same extent do we justify the tyranny over ourselves by those whom we presently tyrannize, but will not for much longer.

I do not know what percentage of the human race is white but it is certainly in the minority. As the planet grows smaller in terms of time between the spaces on it, and as more and more raw physical power becomes available at less and less cost to more and more people, the oppressed will must certainly turn on the oppressor with all of the justification by which the oppressor justified.

I do not know which type of thought is a greater threat to the continued existence of mankind, and the rights and privileges of the entire human race. On the one hand is the type of thought as expressed by a certain Episcopalian minister who takes the National Council of Churches to task for being "discordant voices," and for having the temerity to issue "pro-

nouncements on social and political issues and matters of faith and morals." This type of thought justifies the existence of tyranny by refusing to recognize its existence and by taking the appalling position that the Church as an institution has no business stating its position with respect to man's relationship to himself, with himself, and with the rest of the Universe.

The second type of thought which, in my opinion, is equally dangerous to man's continued existence is that expressed by a certain Baptist minister who simply takes the position that he is in *favor* of tyranny. He necessarily implies that he is in favor of tyranny only so long as he is the tyrant.

Each type of thought is equally dangerous to the continued existence of the values which I insist we stand for.

The Unitarian Church, along with a very few other churches throughout the world, is in a marvelous position to assist mankind by *insisting* upon man's *achievement* of his highest ideals, aspirations and beliefs. This church is at least free of those crucially time-wasting arguments as to whether God is not One but Three, and at the same time not Three but One; of whether or not the mother of Christ was in fact a virgin at time of conception, as if such fact, if it be one, were other than a matter of biological curiosity; and of whether Christ was more or less a human being than the rest of us.

The Unitarian Church and Unitarians are thus in the enviable position of being free to think; and having thought, to decide; and having decided, to state what we are

*The South, in this connection, certainly has no monopoly on the exercise of, or the desire to exercise, tyranny over others in the United States. I find as much evidence of the exercise, or the desire to exercise, tyranny in many labor unions as in many employer organizations. I find such evidence also in as many radical liberals as I do in radical conservatives.

for and what we are willing to stand up for, to the death if need be; and having so decided and so stated, to act with all of our might only in accordance therewith: never to compromise with tyranny in any form; never to justify tyranny in any form; never to practice tyranny in any form; and to exert all of our influence with all of our might to abolish its very existence from the face of this planet.



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